622 [565] [130 cont.] Gaimard lists quite a number of persons in each settlement, besides the actual village chief, who belong to the rank of chief. The chiefs -- it is not noted whether all of them or only the village chiefs, probably all, in view of what will presently be said about taboos -- enjoy religious respect, are the mediators with the atua. Dillon ascribes special religious standing to Moembe, the chief of Maneve. [565] The chiefs of the entire group constituted a closed corporation, which did not take part in the quarrels of their subjects. Their esteem [131] ex- [628] tended also to the inhabitants of neighboring villages to such an extent that they induced people who were at war with each other to separate and were able to bring about the return of prisoners. [576] One village had a female chief (1). A sign of esteem is hand-

1. Dillon, pp. 153, 177, 193 f., 232, 266 (according to p. 177, the [554] wife and daughter of a chief not only wore the bark belt, but also the breast disk of the men, but no ornaments in their short hair). D'Urville, pp. 135, 149, 172 f., 176, 183, etc. Quoy, ibid., p. 317. Sainson, ibid., p. [262] 356 (he maintains that only the chiefs may eat pigs). Gaimard, ibid., pp. 323 ff., 327 f., 347 f.

[576] kissing, that is to say, probably the touching of the back of the hand with the nose (2).

2. D'Urville, pp. 175, 188.

622 784 [264] One of the principal functions of chiefdom in Polynesia is the taboo. On Vanikoro, refuse from the meals of a chief is taboo, wholly in the Polynesian manner, and is therefore tossed into the sea. On the other hand, only chiefs are not affected by the taboo that lies on any kind of object; for instance, they may enter tabooed areas without taking special precautions,

574 [146 cont.]
609 much as his servant and the natives. In Nufiloli hot breadfruit
[262] and yams were served while the most respected natives sat around.
Coote was later also received in the chief's house and was again
576 served breadfruit there (3). On Taumako, Quiros mentions the

3. Gaimard in D'Urville, pp. 327f., 335ff., 343 (in Nama Gaimard slept in the chief's house, but this can scarcely be regarded as normal). Coote, p. 154.

embrace as a gesture of greeting. Joest, on Ndeni, mentions nose-rubbing, also on hand and foot; otherwise, according to him, the only greeting is a kind of grin upon meeting. Upon departure, the native at most says: "I am going now" (4).

4. Dalrymple, p. 128. Joest in Baessler, p. 392.

763 When a man feels that his end is near, he divides his
[428] personal belongings so that a part goes to his son, a part to his brother, and a part to other relatives (5). On the southern

5. O'Ferrall, p. 223. According to Codrington, p. 63, the nephew usually inherits, more rarely the sons, but this probably applies at most to the Reef Islands where mother-right prevails.

islands, Te Mami, Utupua, and Vanikoro, if death is slow in coming, the dying person is taken into the spirit house in order
000 to hasten death (6). On the day of death, the members of the

6. O'Ferrall, p. 230.

/156 cont./

Today, besides Mr. Matthews, only one missionary of the Melanesian Mission periodically lives on Nitendi, and colonization by Whites has never been very great. Thus there is little direct contact between Whites and natives on the island itself.

The inhabitants of Nitendi do not enjoy a very good reputation and are regarded as war-like and aggressive, probably not entirely unjustly, for Mendaña himself, the discoverer of the island, was greeted with a hail of arrows, even before he landed. This was the customary welcome accorded almost every stranger in Melanesia, however, and if elsewhere strangers were first induced to land then attacked, this in itself shows the more candid and more courageous character of the Nitendi men. And in fact, they seem candid and not very crafty, at least in comparison with the inhabitants of the New Hebrides. Now that they have become accustomed to generally peaceful intercourse with Whites as a result of missions and recruitment, they are, in contrast to other Melanesians, gay, trustful, and obliging, even in front of Whites. Only a slight infraction of their etiquette, however, arouses spontaneous enmity. Then they reach for the bow and arrow, but their anger quickly subsides, especially if they do not have the advantage, and a payment will usually atone for the crime. Often it seems as though they fight only to satisfy their laws. The beginnings of gratitude are there.

A sense for the comic is strongly developed. There is great fondness for ridicule, and their wit seems to be keen and to the point. A man's weak side is grasped in a moment and forever afterward it is laughed at and ridiculed. They have no compassion. Other people's suffering leaves them cold or amuses them, whereas their own pain is very strongly felt, not so much chronic suffering as acute injury.

Animals are tortured out of carelessness, but domestic animals are well cared for. Children are treated tenderly (1),

1. [Probably everywhere the smaller children are carried by the mother on the left hip in the bark-cloth shawl,

/156 cont./

854 the larger children riding on the back (male children by the father). Documentation for Tumotu: O'Ferrall, Santa Cruz and the Reef Islands, the section "A New School Village"; for the Reef Islands: Coombe, plate facing p. 211, and Speiser, Südsee, Ill. 94, and 96.]

855 children are treated tenderly (1), but they seem to love them chiefly because they are entertaining. [562] The woman is apparently despised, but there are cases of conjugal love.

/157/ The bargaining instinct is strongly pronounced, 181 but they are not dishonest or particularly avaricious in trading. 437 On the other hand, the people are rather thievish, and to be sure not altogether because they are accustomed to a certain communism, as seems to be the case on Polynesian islands.

574 The visitor to a village is usually taken to the men's house, where he is offered a clean mat and a headrest and is served food as a token of hospitality (1). According to Coombe,

1. [Speiser, Südsee, p. 293. Coombe, p. 180, mentions the extravagant generosity of the Nitendi people toward strangers. Yet etiquette requires that one not talk much with a guest (ibid., p. 182).]

• [576]

[576] p. 182, however, it is improper to show pleasure over a gift [431] because this implies that the giver has made a great sacrifice and is a poor man. They like to show a guest their possessions, [436] especially the best roll of feather money. Also, the men are not unwilling to show their skill in weaving and plaiting nets. [462] This brings about a certain familiarity, so that one easily forms 181 too favorable an opinion of the people, until he again has occasion to observe their baser instincts.